

Repulse of Raids by “Mercenaries” and Guinean Exiles. - U.N. security Council Resolution. - Report by Special U.N. Mission. - Extraordinary Meeting of OAU Council of Ministers.

Radio Conakry announced on Nov. 22 that early that morning “mercenaries” from neighbouring countries, and in particular Portuguese Guinea, had attempted to land at Conakry, and that President Sekou Toure had issued an “appeal to the people” and was personally directing operations against the invaders. After it had been announced that “foreign warships” were in Guinean territorial waters, the President declared in the afternoon that “hundreds and hundreds” of “mercenaries of various nationalities” were in the Guinean capital. Late at night, however, the political bureau of the *Parti démocratique de Guinée* (the country's sole legal party) claimed that the invasion by 350 “European and African mercenaries fighting under the flag of Portuguese colonialism” had been foiled, that all points of resistance had been overcome, and that “militants in uniform” were in effective control of the whole city and standing by to prevent any new attack.

Giving further details, the President said in his announcements that the invaders had come from Portuguese Guinea, that many of them had been taken prisoner, and that one of these, giving his name as Keita Mamadou, born in Bissau (the capital of Portuguese Guinea), had stated that they had received instructions from a Portuguese general and had been carried in six ships, each of six commandos having had separate and specific tasks such as the capture of military camps and the occupation of airstrips which would enable reinforcements to be landed by parachute.

According to Radio Conakry, a second attempt to invade Guinea was made late on Nov. 23 but was also foiled, President Sekou Toure having been in full control of the situation. It was admitted the same day, however, that, although the invaders had failed to occupy the airport, they had captured the Camayenne prison and released political prisoners, including Colonel Kaman Diaby, the former Army Chief of Staff who had been condemned to death in 1969 [see 23408], and that they had wrecked the headquarters of the *Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e do Cabo Verde* (PAIGC)—whose guerrilla forces were active in Portuguese Guinea. It was, however, reported on Nov. 24 that Senor Amilcar Cabral, the PAIGC leader, was “safe and sound”.

While no reliable figures were available for the casualties caused by the invasion, it was announced in East Berlin on Nov. 23 that Dr. Siegfried Krebs, deputy consul at the East German Embassy in Conakry, had been killed in the fighting and Herr Helmut Fischer, commercial attache, seriously wounded. In Bonn the death was announced of Count Ulf von Tiesenhausen, employed by a German firm in Conakry.

Travellers arriving in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) from Conakry on Nov. 23 stated that hostilities in the Guinean capital had ceased and that the “hostile” ships had left Guinea after many persons had been killed.

Radio Conakry claimed the same day that the invaders had supporters in Conakry who had received advance information of the operation, which the Guinean Government described as “part, of a plan by foreign powers to reconquer African countries with revolutionary regimes”. President Sekou Toure also alleged that mercenaries were being trained in Portuguese Guinea by the former Colonel Jean Schramme, who had been a mercenary leader in the Congo [see 22729 A], but it was pointed out by the Portuguese Government on Nov. 25 that M. Schramme had been a poultry farmer in Portugal for two years and was still in that country.

Radio Conakry announced on Nov. 24 that a third attempt by the “mercenaries” to land in the city had been repulsed but that the foreign ships were still patrolling the coast. According to reports from Dakar (Senegal) the next day, more than 300 persons had been killed during the three days’ fighting in Guinea, but unofficial reports from Conakry on Nov. 26 gave the casualties as only about 50 Guineans and three Europeans, while the invaders’ losses remained unknown.

On Nov. 28 Radio Conakry claimed that there had been a further attempted invasion, this time by about 200 “mercenaries” entering Guinea from Portuguese Guinea, but they had been surrounded by Guinean

troops near Koundara, and the next day it was asserted that 30 of the invaders had been killed and 18 captured.

The "Voice of the Revolution", broadcasting from Conakry on Dec. 2, appealed to all Portuguese soldiers in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique to desert and join the forces of the nationalist movements before the African people would hold them to account for their deeds, as the "final confrontation with Portugal" was approaching.

Different versions of the invasion were given by Paris spokesmen for Guineans opposed to the Sekou Toure regime and by the Paris weekly *Jeune Afrique*.

A Guinean spokesman said in Paris on Nov. 30 that the raid on Conakry had been organized by the *Front de libération nationale de Guinée* (FLNG) and had been carried out by 150 to 200 men with Soviet arms sailing from Sierra Leone, without any Portuguese participation, in boats rented from a Monaco-based company through a Lebanese agent; that they had controlled Conakry for six hours early on Nov. 22; but that they had failed in their mission because they had not gained control of the radio station.

Jeune Afrique on Dec. 1 published an "eyewitness report" stating that the raid had been planned and carried out by exiled Guinean Army officers, not by Portuguese; that its failure was due to a sudden power cut and difficulties in communication; but that the struggle for "the liberation of Guinea from Sekou Touré's dictatorship" would be continued, as about a million exiled Guineans were waiting to return to their country. The report added that a Portuguese offer of aid, made two years earlier through Senegalese intermediaries, had been turned down by a majority of the writer's group, which had acted without support from the politicians of the FLNG.

In an open letter to U Thant, the U.N. Secretary-General, from the *Regroupement des Guinéens en Europe* (RGE), published in *Le Monde* on Dec. 9, it was claimed that the Conakry events had been the work of the "armed forces of Guinean liberation"; that only Guineans and no mercenaries had been involved; that 450 prisoners had been freed in the actions; and that General Diane Lansana, one of the "sinister torturers" of Sekou Touré's regime, had been shot dead.

On the other hand, the Liberian Ministry of Information announced on Nov. 29 that a Portuguese soldier, Francisco Gomez Nanque, then under arrest in Monrovia, had declared that he had been a member of a parachute unit instructed to invade Guinea, and that the invasion had been started from Bafata in Portuguese Guinea but that he himself had escaped and been picked up by a Dutch merchant ship, the *Straat Bali*, whose master confirmed later that he had rescued this soldier.

President Sekou Toure had previously declared on various occasions that plots to assassinate him and to install a new regime had been foiled. Thus he claimed on July 5, 1969, that he had been warned of such a plot in January of that year, and later the "Voice of the Revolution" announced that a plot by FLNG members to kill him on Oct. 2, 1970, had been thwarted. Earlier, on July 24, 1969, he had been attacked, in the presence of ex-President Nkrumah of Ghana and President Kaunda of Zambia (the latter then on an official visit to Guinea), by Keita Tidiane, who was said to belong to an opposition group, members of which were allegedly being trained in the Ivory Coast, and who, after being knocked down by the President, was lynched by the crowd in Conakry.

General Antonio de Spínola, Governor and C.-in-C. of Portuguese Guinea, denied in Bissau on Nov. 22 that Portugal was in any way involved in the action, and the Portuguese Government declared in Lisbon the same day: "We positively deny this accusation, which has not the slightest foundation. Portugal has enough trouble already in her African territories, because of its neighbours, and therefore has no interest in creating more."

Dr. Rui Patrício, the Portuguese Foreign Minister, said in Brussels on Nov. 24 that Portugal had always opposed interference in the internal affairs of other States, and it was nonsense to suggest that she would interfere in the affairs of a Portuguese province [i.e. Portuguese Guinea].

The Lisbon newspaper *Diário da Manhã* (organ of the ruling *União Nacional*) declared on Nov. 27 that the whole affair was "a puerile attempt" to overthrow President Sekou Touré's Government and a "ridiculous story" showing that unscrupulous elements were trying to hold Portugal responsible for dissension in their own ranks.

Radio Bissau announced on Nov. 29 that a number of former political prisoners had arrived in Portuguese Guinea by ship together with poisons who had taken part in the raid on Conakry on Nov. 22 and also with deserters from the Guinean Army who were seeking asylum. From Lisbon it was reported on Nov. 30 that 25 Portuguese, held in Guinea, some of them for six years, as prisoners of war and freed during the invasion, had arrived from Bissau and had been placed in "guarded seclusion". 40 other Portuguese expelled from Guinea arrived in Madrid on Nov. 30, some of them showing facial injuries.

The Portuguese Government on Nov. 25 repeated its denial that Portugal had played any part in the affair and also denied that the invasion had been launched by the military authorities in Bissau without reference to Lisbon. General Spínola said that the action had been “an attempted coup” and that it was only a matter of time before M. Sekou Toure's “unpopular regime” would fall, like those of Dr. Nkrumah in Ghana and Modibo Keita in Mali.

Messages of support and sympathy reached Conakry from the Governments of many States in Africa and elsewhere, and from a number of them the Guinean Government accepted offers of aid in war material, money and food.

After President Nyerere of Tanzania had sent such a message on Nov. 23, the Tanzanian Cabinet decided the following day to send £500,000 to President Sekou Toure'.

Major-General Gowon, the Nigerian Head of State, announced on Nov. 23 that his country was willing to send military help to Nigeria, and the Governments of Mali and Sierra Leone were reported the same day to have offered to send their armed forces.

Dr. Mungai, the Foreign Minister of Kenya, stated in Parliament in Nairobi on Nov. 24 that Kenya was prepared to send money, material and men to safeguard the independence of Guinea; he added that the time was “ripe for an all-out aggressive fight against the imperialistic dictatorship of Portugal in order to liberate Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola”.

A message of support was also sent by President Giri of India, and the Governments of Senegal and the Ivory Coast (which had repeatedly been in dispute with Guinea) expressed their “indignation” and “horror” at the invasion.

After the Government of the United Arab Republic had condemned the invasion on Nov. 23, it was reported from Dakar on Nov. 26 that arms and ammunition from the U.A.R. had been landed at Conakry airport and been distributed to the population. Following consultations between President Sekou Toure' and delegations from Nigeria and Algeria on Nov. 26, Nigerian arms for the Guinean Army were brought in by U.A.R. Air Force planes the following day, and Radio Conakry claimed that war material had also arrived from Algeria and Libya on Nov. 26.

In Gambia, President Sir Dauda Jawara informed U Thant on Nov. 23 that a total of 38 exiled Guineans had been arrested at Brufut (southern Gambia) on Sept. 30 after they had prepared a military expedition against Guinea and claimed to be in Portuguese pay, and that they had been condemned to varying terms of imprisonment and would be deported.

From Equatorial Guinea, where anti-Portuguese demonstrations had taken place, 40 Portuguese refugees arrived in Madrid by air on Nov. 30, stating that they had been expelled in reprisal for the alleged Portuguese attack on Conakry; that their homes in Santa Isabel (capital of Equatorial Guinea) had been sacked and burned; and that some of them had been beaten up and forced to sign an undertaking not to return. [128 Spaniards who had also been expelled arrived in Madrid at the same time.]

The Soviet Government, in a statement on Nov. 23, called the invasion “an open attempt by Portuguese colonialists to bring down the progressive regimes and strike a blow at the national liberation movement in Africa” and an act of “imperialist aggression” which must be “ended immediately”. Radio Peking on Nov. 23 expressed “firm support for the Guinean people and Government”, and in a statement on Nov. 25 the Chinese Government declared that it was “entirely due to the support of U.S. imperialism that the Portuguese colonialist empire... should dare to launch such flagrant aggression against Guinea”.

President Sekou Toure', on the other hand, on Dec. 2 thanked President Nixon of the U.S.A. for his “message of sympathy and support on the occasion of the grave and criminal aggression by Portugal”. A spokesman for the U.S. State Department announced on Dec. 11 that the U.S.A. had decided to grant Guinea aid worth \$4,700,000 and consisting mainly of food and agricultural produce in order to give expression to the United States' sympathy and “to contribute to the reconstruction made necessary by the attempted invasion”.

Mr. Vernon J. Mwaanga, the Zambian Ambassador to the U.N., announced on Dec. 4 that his Government had donated \$2,100,000 to Guinea by way of “fraternal aid” for the reparation of damage caused by the invasion.

Meanwhile President Sekou Toure' had appealed to the United Nations for help. In his request, handed to the U.N. Secretary-General by Dr. El Hadj Abdoulaye Toure (Guinean Ambassador to the U.N.) on Nov. 22, the President asked for an early meeting of the U.N. Security Council and for “immediate intervention by airborne U.N. troops to assist the National Army of the Republic of Guinea”.

The Security Council accordingly met the same day and early on Nov. 24, after protracted debate, unanimously adopted a resolution, introduced by Burundi, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Syria and Zambia, in which

the Council, without naming Portugal, demanded “the immediate cessation of the armed attack against the Republic of Guinea” and “the immediate withdrawal of all external armed forces and mercenaries together with the military equipment used in the armed attack”. It also decided “to send a special mission to the Republic of Guinea to report on the situation immediately”, this special mission to be formed “after consultation between the President of the security Council and the Secretary-General”.

A U.S. amendment to the resolution, suggesting that the mission should be formed after consultation among the members of the security Council, failed to be adopted as only (Nationalist) China, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. voted for it, while the other 12 members of the Council abstained.

It was announced on Nov. 24 that the mission would consist of Major-General Padma Rahadur Khatri (Nepal), as chairman, with Senor Augusto Espinosa (Colombia), Mr. Max Jakobson (Finland), Mr. Eugeniusz Kulaga (Poland) and Mr. Vernon J. Mwaanga (Zambia) as its other members.

On the arrival of the U.N. mission in Conakry on Nov. 25 President Sekou Toure expressed regret that his request for an armed force to combat the invaders had not been agreed to, and continued: “The arrival of the inquiry mission is not entirely satisfactory. In the eyes of the Guinean Government there was an opportunity to prove irrefutably the total guilt of the Portuguese Government. Enemy warships, reinforced by submarines, continue to patrol offshore with the manifest aim of continuing their action against the Guinean people.”

President Sekou Toure also appealed to all “friendly countries” to supply him with bomber and fighter aircraft to fight a new series of “enemy incursions”; he alleged that the invasion had been supported by Portuguese submarines which had shelled Conakry, and that foreign diplomats had been able to witness the invasion carried out from the sea with support by fighter aircraft. [The Portuguese Government on the other hand pointed out on Nov. 26 that the four submarines which it possessed had all been in Europe at the time.]

Mr. Jakobson, the Finnish member of the mission, explained to the President that the U.N. had no combat troops at its disposal, but M. Sekou Toure' was reported as having replied that he hoped the mission would complete its work “in 48 hours and go”.

On Nov. 26 President Sekou Toure' was reported as saying that the U.N. refusal to send troops would cause the States of Africa to conclude that they alone would have to defend their sovereignty. His brother, M. Ismael Toure' (Minister of Finance), called the sending of the U.N. mission “a diversionary manoeuvre” which had “disappointed and disillusioned” Guinea, and added that the object of the attack on Conakry had been to set up a “puppet Government subservient to imperialism” and containing “certain traitors” arrested the previous year.

The U.N. mission returned to New York on Nov. 29. In its report, published on Dec. 4 and stating that the mission had interviewed about a dozen members of the invading force, all Africans, in a military prison in Guinea, it gave the facts of the raid as follows:

Early on Nov. 22 between 350 and 400 men, wearing Guinean uniforms and green armbands, were landed in Conakry from two troop transport vessels and three or four smaller patrol boats. The invaders, armed with infantry weapons including bazookas and mortars, aimed their attack against Government buildings, the residence of President Sekou Toure' and the headquarters of the PAIGC, and at the liberation of Portuguese and of Guinean opponents of the President's regime held captive in Conakry.

From the fact that foreign naval units were involved, as confirmed by eyewitnesses, the mission concluded that another Power was involved, and it added that information obtained from other sources appeared to confirm the Guinean Government' conviction that this Power was Portugal. The members of the mission agreed that the ships involved had been manned predominantly by White Portuguese troops, under the command of White Portuguese officers, but that the commandos landed had consisted mainly of Africans from Portuguese Guinea under the command of White officers as well as a contingent of dissident Guineans trained on Portuguese territory.

The report expressed the view that the invasion had aimed at the overthrow of President Sekou Toure's Government, the weakening of the PAIGC and the freeing of Portuguese prisoners.

The Portuguese Government issued a statement in Lisbon on Dec. 4 reaffirming its “formal declaration” that it had “neither ordered nor authorized nor consented to any military operation against the Republic of Guinea”. The statement also declared that the U.N. mission should have drawn no conclusions, and the security Council should arrive at no decision, without first informing Portugal of the facts alleged to prove Portuguese responsibility.

The Portuguese High Command in Bissau stated the same day that Lieutenant Joao Janeiro Lopes, presented to the mission as a leader of the invading forces, had in fact deserted and fled to Guinea in September 1970, after being accused of having murdered a Black soldier serving in his unit. In a further statement issued on Dec. 7 the Portuguese Government formally rejected the U.N. mission's report, which it said was "unilaterally made and gave the Portuguese Government no opportunity to refute the facts mentioned".

It added that the mission had restricted its visits to prisons in Conakry and Kindia "collecting nothing but the [Guinean] official version"; that all its other testimonies came from "diplomats of African and Communist countries whose viewpoints on every subject concerning Portugal are well known"; that the Portuguese origin of the ships involved had not been proved; and that it was unlikely that their presence should not have been noticed by the Guinean Air Force and Navy.

The U.N. security Council debated the report on Dec. 7-8.

Mr. Vernon J. Mwaanga (Zambia) urged the Council to demand reparations from Portugal, to apply enforcement measures against that country and, in case these failed to obtain a response, to expel Portugal from the U.N.

Mr. Jacob Malik (U.S.S.R.) insisted that the Council should "condemn the Portuguese aggression and impose upon Portugal the sanctions provided for in Article 42 of the U.N. Charter".

A draft resolution, "strongly" condemning Portugal, sponsored by Burundi, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Syria and Zambia, was adopted by the Council on Dec. 8 by 11 votes to none, with four abstentions (Britain, France, Spain and the United States).

The resolution [290(1970)] endorsed the conclusions of the special mission's report; demanded that Portugal should pay the Republic of Guinea "full compensation for the extensive damage to life and property caused by the armed attack and invasion"; "solemnly" warned Portugal that "in the event of any repetition of armed attacks against independent African States, the security Council shall immediately consider appropriate steps or measures in accordance with... the U.N. Charter"; declared that the presence of Portuguese colonialism on the African continent was "a serious threat to the peace and security of independent African States"; appealed to all States to give moral and material assistance to Guinea to strengthen and defend its independence and territorial integrity; requested all States to abstain from giving economic and military assistance to the Government of Portugal which would enable it to pursue its "repressive action" against the peoples of the territories remaining under its domination, as well as against independent countries in Africa; and requested Portugal's allies to use their influence so that Portugal should respect the stipulations of the resolution.

The Portuguese Government rejected the resolution on Dec. 9, declaring that it could only be regarded as "incitement to acts of violence and unrest" in Africa and that the security Council's procedure had disregarded "fundamental legal processes".

Radio Conakry announced on Dec. 15 that President Sekou Toure' had asked U Thant not to send a proposed U.N. mission to evaluate the damage suffered by Guinea through the invasion, because this damage "could not be expressed in financial terms" and the only acceptable reparation would be the immediate recognition and proclamation of the national independence of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.

On the initiative of the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and the Governments of the U.A.R., Libya and the Sudan, an extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was held in Lagos on Dec. 9-11 to consider the attempted invasion of Guinea. It was attended by representatives of 40 of the Organization's 41 member-States.

M. Diallo Telli, the OAU's secretary-general and himself a Guinean, had previously alleged that, as Portugal was "too underdeveloped" to stage such aggression, the invasion of Guinea had been "inspired by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", of which Portugal is a member.

At the Council's opening session on Dec. 9 M. Ismael Toure', the Guinean Minister of Finance, read a report on the events, declared that Guinea wished to strengthen its defence potential to be able to resist any future aggression, and proposed the establishment of a military force to ensure the defence of independent African States bordering on Portuguese territories. At its conclusion on Dec. 11 the meeting adopted a resolution introduced by Burundi and condemning the "treacherous aggression committed by Portugal against the Republic of Guinea".

The resolution also condemned "all forces" which had "collaborated directly or indirectly with Portugal" and the "NATO Powers" which had "permitted and supported by their complicity the various Portuguese attacks against several African territories and States"; it further demanded that appropriate reparation

should be paid to Guinea by Portugal for the loss of life and material damage caused by the invasion, in accordance with the security Council's resolution of [see above] Dec. 8.

The Council also decided to instruct the OAU Defence Commission [see 24191 A] to study ways and means of establishing a common Army as suggested during the debate, and that contributions by OAU member-States were to be paid into an assistance fund for Guinea.—(Le Monde - Neue Zürcher Zeitung - Times - Daily Telegraph - Guardian - Financial Times - U.N. Information Centre, London - Indian High Commissioner's Office, London)(**Prev. rep. 24197 A.**)

© 1931- 2011 Keesing's Worldwide, LLC - All Rights Reserved.